IMPORTED FIRE ANTS

by

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The Imported Fire Ant Project started at SABCL in 1988 to evaluate natural enemies of native fire ants as candidates for the biocontrol of *Solenopsis invicta* Buren and *S. richteri* Forel in the US. For information on the project, see previous SABCL Annual Reports and visit http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/site_main.htm?modecode=02-11-00-00

Viruses

During the reporting period, the activity was reduced to investigate the preliminary field host specificity of the positive-strand RNA *S. invicta* virus #1 (SINV-1). Reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reactions (RT-PCR) were conducted for the presence of SINV-1 in seven *Solenopsis* spp. RNA was extracted following the Trizol method (according to Invitrogen®´s instructions) from 10-15 ethanol-preserved ants sub-sampled from each of 114 colonies previously collected in Argentina (91), Bolivia (6) and Uruguay (17).

Results

Only two (1.75%) colonies of *S. richteri* and *S. quinquecuspis* in Argentina were found positive for SINV-1 (Table 1).

Table 1. *Solenopsis* species examined for SINV-1

Solenopsis species	Colonies examined	SINV-1 positive colonies
near *S. interrupta*	6	0
S. interrupta	26	0
S. daguerrei	13	0
S. richteri	40	1
S. macdonaghi	17	0
S. quinquecuspis	5	1
S. weyrauchi	7	0
Total	**114**	**2**

Future plans

- Collection and shipping of fire ant colonies and natural enemies as requested by cooperators, including microsporidia, phorid flies and viruses.